

Read-Aloud-Think-Aloud
Cause and Effect
Intensive Reading

In the Well

Andrew Hudgins

My father **cinched** the rope,
a noose around my waist,
and lowered me into
the darkness. I could taste
my fear. It tasted first
of dark, then earth, then rot.
I swung and struck my head
and at that moment got
another then: then blood,
which **spiked** my mouth with iron.
Hand over hand, my father
dropped me from then to then:
then water. Then wet fur,
which I hugged to my chest.
I shouted. Daddy hauled
the wet rope. I gagged, and pressed

my neighbor's missing dog
against me. I held its death
and rose up to my father.
Then light. Then hands. Then breath.

Ok, did somebody see something in a well, fall in a well, or throw a penny in a well?

Let me see if I can figure out what cinched means? A noose? I know you hang people with a noose, but not around the waist. **Why** did the poet use that word? Let me read on.

Oh, I get it, the father is lowering the child down a well. **Why** is it a noose, then? Maybe the child feels like he's about to be killed. I wonder if he's in trouble.

Why is the speaker afraid? He's going deeper in the well where it's dark.

Got another what? What caused his mouth to bleed?

Why did the poet keep using the word "then"? I think it must have something to do with the motion of dropping down in a jerky fashion. Maybe it also has to do with the scene unfolding one second at a time.

Is his jacket made of fur? **Why** is he gagging?

Oh, I get it. There's a reason why he had to take this trip down the well. He had to find the dead dog that had fallen down the well. I guess he had to go down the well **because** he was small enough to fit because his dad was strong enough to get him out.

That last line. I know it must mean something deeper than just getting out of the hole. A father lifting a son up to the light, holding him in his hands, and then the son is able to breathe? I think this is some religious symbolism.